



Chambers's Journal

SIXTH SERIES.

THE SPIRIT OF OUR SOLDIERS UNDER FIRE.

By WALTER J. MATHAMS, F.R.G.S., Author of *Comrades All* and *Jack Ahoy*.

They closed full fast on every side,
No slackness there was found;
And many a gallant gentleman
Lay gasping on the ground.



O runs the ballad of 'Chevy Chase,' and the old fighting ardour, the stubborn stand against tremendous odds, and the grim determination to get what they go for characterise our British soldiers in the battles of to-day. Writers in the *Spectator* and other papers may argue with all their literary logic on the diminished risks in modern warfare through the introduction of gunpowder, and tell us that it takes a ton of lead to kill a man; yet, when facing facts in a stiff fight with a determined enemy armed with Mauser rifles, and battered with Creusot guns, every man will have a haunting feeling that one little rounded bit of the ton of lead or a ragged shred of shell has a remarkably good chance of coming his way and finding a billet somewhere inside his tunic. He knows his danger and can calculate his risks—not at the distance of six thousand miles, but at the close range of five hundred or a thousand yards, less or more.

How does he behave then? What is the spirit of the man when he takes his life in his hand, and springs forward into a storm of shot and shell which at any moment may help him to find his fate? What is his mettle when he is cooped up in a beleaguered camp or town, with the roar of artillery and the rattle of musketry sounding around him night and day? The present war answers these questions to the satisfaction of our national expectations and to the honour of our soldiers engaged. Officers and men are acting with the grit and go and sturdiness of our island breed. Every time we turn to a telegram from Mafeking we expect to read something like this from Colonel Baden-Powell: 'All well here. Everything going merrily. Tremendous cannonade from the other side yesterday. One mule killed, several

people wounded. Made a sortie this morning; drove the enemy back. Can hold our own, and mean to, till the last.' Remember, too, that this kind of message comes from men who are under the double danger of fever and fire. The spirit of it is all that we could wish; and we see that the courage of the British soldier is of the same stuff as in the olden time, whatever we may think of his cunning in comparison with his present foe. It needs the highest qualities of pluck and endurance to stand the raking fire of a siege-gun and a battery of seven field-guns continually pounding an invested town like Mafeking; and these qualities are there, from the commanding officer to the drummer-boy.

All along the line of this strenuous campaign the story is the same. Cases of cowardice are unheard of, except from the reports of the enemy; and these may be taken for what they are worth. Doubtless, with so many fresh and untried men in our ranks, the first rush of bullets through the air may send a shiver of fear through them—for, after all, Tommy is a man of like feelings with the rest of us; but they still go on, and put the business of the hour through with all the weight and dash of their manhood. Even where the first fright is for a moment overmastering, they still manage to pull themselves together, and work to the front, as in the case of a trooper who was halting in a spasm of dread, and said, in answer to the major's question, 'Why don't you go on?' 'Can't, sir; my feelings won't let me. I would if I could; but that's just it.' Almost immediately after that speech a Mauser bullet came by, taking away a part of his lip and moustache; and a few minutes later the major saw him forging to the front, crying, 'Where are the beggars? Let me get at them;' and in the front he kept till the fight was done.

At Modder River seven thousand of our men advanced against eleven thousand of the enemy across a wide level plain, without cover, and destitute of food and water, and fought from sun-

rise to sunset under the fierce rays of an African sun. There is no record of cowardice, but a continuous tale of marching and fighting with the steadiness of men on parade. The firing from the opposite side is represented as making one tremendous roar like the explosion of a countless number of crackers. The plain was swept throughout its whole extent by a steady stream of the enemy's bullets. Not a man who set foot on it was at any moment out of range. Every man and horse became an immediate mark for the enemy. Here and there our men found shelter behind some rising ground; but in the main they stood absolutely exposed to the firing of a foe sheltered by trenches. The fire was terrific throughout the day. In the face of it two dozen men, headed by Colonel Codrington and Captain Fielding of the 1st Coldstreams, with Captain Selheim of the Queensland Permanent Force, forded the river on the right without flinching, whilst a Hotchkiss was belching out its rain of death. The Argyll and Sutherlandshire Highlanders, with the Northumberland Fusiliers, crossed the river under similar conditions, and with the same resolute will, to dislodge the enemy. Keep in mind that most of these men marched with legs blistered through lying in the sun; that they had started without breakfast, and were without a drop of water to quench the intolerable thirst which must have been upon them, and you will be compelled to admit that they behaved, as Lord Methuen suggests, in a manner worthy of the best traditions of our British army and our British race. The spirit of the past is our power to-day, and the enervating influence of a long peace and the absence of deadly struggle on the battlefield with an equal foe has not degenerated our islanders. From whatever part of the Empire they may come, they will fight for the flag which has brought them their freedom, and which, as long as it floats, is the pledge of its advance and endurance.

From letters received from both privates and officers we shall always get a better view of the actualities of battle and the behaviour of our men than from despatches or newspaper telegrams. The writers pen their words from their own experiences, and tell a practically unvarnished tale to their friends at home. Such letters, often pathetic with their story of pain, telling of sufferings of marching, hunger, sleeplessness, are also alive with the alert spirit of men who, whilst they are conscious of their danger, are nevertheless ready to make merry over the difficulties and privations of the situation. You hear of football and cricket matches carried on in such a place as Ladysmith, with shells and bullets flying overhead. Probably they are not in absolute danger when they do this; but that they enter into these games at such times shows the spirit of our men, and that they are not depressed by their situation nor afraid of

the ring of fire which gathers closer and closer about them. As far as we have seen, these letters make the best of things under the hardest conditions, and evince a determination to go straight on till the thing which has to be done is done, and done well.

Among the personal narratives which came home after the battle of Elandslaagte was that of a private soldier in the Gordon Highlanders. This soldier, who is quite a young fellow, described in a letter to his widowed mother how, with the rest of his regiment, he came within the fire-zone, and how at a distance of eleven hundred yards he was hit in the leg. As he was not knocked out, he struggled on; but he soon came into a perfect hurricane of bullets. In his own words, they fell 'like hailstones.' Struck not by one but by three other bullets, he collapsed; and, taking out his pipe, consoled himself with a smoke pending the arrival of the ambulance. When he was taken to the hospital it was found that he had four bullets in his left leg and two in the right. Another bullet had pierced his helmet, and another cut off a piece of skin; while no fewer than ten had passed through the folds of his kilt. Only two of the bullets were extracted; but, despite this, the young hopeful wrote to his mother in the best of spirits, expressing his confident expectation that he would soon be well and at the front again. Another soldier was shot in the right thumb, left little finger, on the tip of his ear, and under the chin. A sergeant of the Royal Marines, during the battle of Gras Pan, under a terrific hail of bullets, says it was grand to see our men so cool and calm. *'There was not a waver in the line.'*

Bennet Burleigh of the *Daily Telegraph* has the same to say of the behaviour of the men on the Tugela. Not Rome in her palmiest days, he declares, possessed more devoted sons, as they stepped, proud to do their duty, in the face of a hurricane of leaden hail. Even a French newspaper, the *Temps*, paid a high tribute to the gallantry of the British infantry. It said that the magnificent manner in which the troops behaved when they were suddenly exposed to a galling fire ought to be a lesson to those who speak disdainfully of the English 'mercenaries'; and that there are not, perhaps, in the whole of Europe troops who are as good as they. Never, indeed, in the opinion of competent experts, have the valour, the endurance, and the discipline of the British soldier been more grandly illustrated than in this campaign.

Another old-fashioned feature in the present war is the splendid spirit of self-sacrifice and comradeship which is shown by our men on the field. It has always been the boast of our people that we stand by one another to the last, and many of our best poems and paintings depict scenes and deeds of common brotherhood in the hour of danger, loss, and death; and to-day our men are making living pictures of the same kind for the

comfort and inspiration of the whole nation. Whatever goes down in the fight, comradeship keeps its place. At Elandslaagte, Colonel Scott Chisholm, who had been fearlessly directing his troops through a pelting fire, was suddenly struck down with a bullet in his leg. The colonel sprang to his feet and went on; but down he went the second time with a wound in the groin. The fire about him at the time is described as fearful in its intensity; but nevertheless a trooper named Benson rushed forward, and, after some difficulty, managed to lift the colonel across his shoulders. The trooper then made for the nearest covering he could see; but on the way another shot, passing through the colonel's brain, killed him instantly. Benson went on, wounded himself, and was at once welcomed with the cheers of his comrades who had seen his glorious act of devotion. Another case of admirable comradeship is seen in the action of a private soldier who stayed with his wounded officer (Captain Donald Paton) on the veldt all through the night, and lay down by his side, too, covering him and giving him what warmth he could from his own body. But such instances, in infinitely varied forms, could be given without number. It is enough to know that still our men under fire will do the best for their country, and will stand by a comrade to the last.

So the succession of the British spirit goes on with the succeeding generations of our British soldiers. On a smaller scale—but to them as large and vital—our soldiers behave as they did at Albuera, where the 'Thin Red Line,' exceedingly thin on that day of days, went into a four hours' fight, and was raked with musketry so near that the men were almost scorched with the blast of the firing, and with artillery ploughing the ranks at fifty yards' range, and came out again victorious but more than decimated. The 3rd Buffs, who entered the fight with twenty-four officers and seven hundred and fifty men, had only five officers and thirty-five of the rank and file to answer the roll-call after the battle was over. It is well to remember in this hour of our stress and strain what Soult said of the British soldier then: 'There is no beating these troops, in spite of their generals. I always thought them bad soldiers (!); now I am sure of it. For I turned their right, pierced their centre—they were everywhere broken; the day was mine, and yet they did not know it, and would not run.' If good soldiery in his estimation consisted in the ability to retire 'in admirable order,' then give us still the men of the stamp and stuff of the 3rd Buffs; and somehow from recent history we cheer ourselves with the belief that we have such men both in reserve and at the front.

At St Pierre, said to be the most crimson field of the Peninsular War, fourteen thousand of our men stood at bay with thirty-five thousand men and twenty-two guns against them. The 92nd Highlanders were to the fore. Their commanding

officer, Colonel Cameron, had ordered his men to dress in all their military style; and, with their tartans and kilts and plumes, and their pipers playing the Highland pibrochs, they marched on up the hill with such force and fury that the French general waved his sword, and his men turned to the right-about and retreated to their original position; but on the field within one square mile lay five thousand men killed or wounded in the short space of three hours. The pluck, the dash, and the endurance of the 92nd had saved the situation. The spirit of the 92nd is still with us, as witness what we read the other day in the red despatch from Magersfontein, where the Highlanders charged the enemy (alas! in vain), and leaving the great heart of General Wauchope still for ever on the African veldt.

At Inkermann our troops, numbering less than five thousand, received and repulsed the attacks of forty thousand Russians with one hundred guns. The men had been on duty for twenty-four hours. Exhausted, hungry, and plunging through rain and fog, they faced the Russian guns with incredible courage. Once only in that long 'private soldiers' fight,' as it has been called, was there a sign of lack of hope. Lieutenant Acton was ordered to attack the western Russian batteries on Shell Hill. The other officers, in the face of such a forlorn hope, declined to follow. 'Then,' said he, 'if you won't come I will attack with my own men. Forward, lads!' But even the men shrank from the gigantic task. Seeing this, he said, 'Then I'll go by myself.' That was enough. First one man sprang to his side, and said, 'Sir, I'll stand by you'; then two more followed; and then he, with sixty men behind him, charged the Russian guns and drove the gunners back. Such was the style of the men all along our lines on that memorable day. There were times when the fury and bitterness of the fight was so great that there was a momentary halt and pause in the onward movement; but they tightened their belts and went on, until Inkermann was ours, and the immense host of the Russian army was driven back. Since Kinglake gives one entire book to this battle, it is easy to see that within the space of a brief magazine article it is impossible to give a full or even adequate idea of the behaviour of our men in their separate troops on that day; but, comparing the numbers engaged, the great results to us, and the fearful consequences to the enemy, Britain had reason to be proud then and for ever of the men who, in the shrouding mist of a winter fog, fought and won the battle of Inkermann.

Of Balaklava, and the behaviour of our men there, little need be said, since the facts of that day stand in the memory of the nation with immortal freshness. Let it be remembered that Sir Colin Campbell rode down the lines of the Highlanders, and said, 'Remember, there is no retreat from here, men. You must die where you stand'; and that their one-voiced shout in reply was, 'Ay, ay, Sir Colin; we'll do that!' We remember, too, that in

the mad rush of the Light Brigade the camp-servers left their work and rushed to their horses, while a private under arrest broke loose, picked up a sword, caught a horse, and went swinging into that fateful gallop for the guns which has left the crash and thud of the ringing hoofs in the heart of the Empire to the present day.

How our men behaved at Dargai, Atbara, and Omdurman all men know; and it is the basis of our confidence in the crisis of the hour that our soldiers in the Transvaal have given manifold proofs by their behaviour under fire, and in conflict with a brave and clever foe, that they are worthy of the name they bear, of the blood which leaps in their veins, of the gallant souls who went before them, and of the nation which has called them to the honour of fighting in her defence.

'That man lies,' said the Duke of Wellington, 'who says he never feared to die.' The Iron Duke, when reminded of the many sons of the nobility in his regiments, with fine fingers and delicate faces, remarked, 'Yes; but the puppies fight well.' This agrees with what was remarked of the graduates and undergraduates of Yale University in the American Civil War. Men of gentle birth and delicate build, though never under fire before, would stand a hotter fire without flinching than

robuster men of heavier weight and tougher fibre. Marshal Montluc, of the French army, acknowledged that he had been often overcome with fear in battle, but recovered his self-possession after prayer. A man in the army of the Potomac was asked if he had ever prayed. He replied that he believed 'that every man of us did when we went into action.'

What the ultimate lessons of this war may be remain to be seen; but already the higher virtues of self-sacrifice, consideration for others, and regard for the common welfare have awakened into desirable activity; and our soldiers, by their behaviour on the field as combatants and comrades, have shown themselves deserving of all the honour and the justice which the nation can give them. If the present conflict leads to a deeper consideration of the character and conditions of the private soldier, with a desire to uplift and improve him, it will not have been in vain. Knowing, as I did, many of the men who lie at Elandslaagte, Modder River, and Magersfontein, I am constrained to repeat what Field-Marshal Lord Roberts said to me before sailing for South Africa: 'If our people knew our soldier as he really is, and would not judge the army by a few bad specimens which here and there may be seen in it, they would do more to help us in trying to keep him sober, steady, and manly.'

OF ROYAL BLOOD.

A STORY OF THE SECRET SERVICE.

CHAPTER XII.—A DESPATCH FROM DOWNING STREET.



AT noon that same day I was standing at the window of Sir John's private room at the Legation, looking moodily out upon the wide, handsome Rue de la Loi, that long, straight thoroughfare which runs up to the Park, wherein the recent International Exhibition was held, and where its imposing buildings still stand. It was a big brown room, well carpeted, and lined with books—a room wherein many a consultation had taken place regarding England's policy towards the Powers. The Legation is a corner building, its front facing upon a courtyard in the Rue de Spa, and its rear overlooking the main thoroughfare, up which the electric trams continually pass.

Graves, the foreign-service messenger, had arrived from London, and the despatch-box he had brought stood unopened upon Sir John's table. I had given the formal receipt for it, and Graves was lunching after his journey. The ambassador alone held the key, and he was down at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The messenger had announced that the despatches were of importance; therefore I had sent word to the chief by telephone of their arrival.

As I stood at the window reflecting upon the

pleasant morning I had spent in the Bois, Sir John suddenly entered in hot haste, and, wishing me good-morning, at once broke the seals and unlocked the box. Inside were two envelopes. One was a plain blue one, rather bulky; the other was white, with a conspicuous blue cross upon it. Sir John tore the latter open and eagerly read its contents. I knew by its appearance that it was one of those private notes, written by the hand of the Marquess of Macclesfield himself, which direct the policy of the greatest Empire in the world. The ambassador read it through, and as he did so sank heavily into his chair, his face set, his gray brows knit, his hand clenched.

'Nothing serious, I hope?' I ventured to remark. 'Serious!' he echoed. 'The outlook grows blacker every moment. Yesterday intelligence was received through our secret service in Paris that a great sensation has been caused in the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs by some discovery, of what nature it could not be accurately ascertained.' Then, after a pause, the ambassador added, 'We, however, know too well, Crawford. The stolen correspondence has, as I feared, reached Paris. If so, we are powerless. War must ensue.'

'Accursed thieves!' I ejaculated, recollecting how ingeniously the file of papers had been extracted from the locked box. 'The mystery is utterly without solution. I've tried to form some theory day by day, but have failed. In all quarters where I have made secret inquiries my efforts have been entirely futile. We have absolutely no clue on which to base a suspicion.'

'But at either the French or Russian Embassies they know something of it,' the ambassador said, resting his troubled brow upon his hand in thought. 'If the correspondence has reached Paris, then it passed through the French Embassy. Have you kept your ears open in that quarter?'

'I have done all that can be done,' I answered. 'My work, however, is not yet finished.'

'Strive on,' he urged impatiently. 'Strive on, night and day. Remember in this affair not only is my personal honour at stake, but the honour of Belgium, and—what is greater to all of us—the honour of the Queen's Empire. The mystery must be solved.'

I nodded, without replying.

'When you were in London the other day, in consultation with the chief, did he make any further explanation of the reason which first prompted him to send me here?' I asked after a long pause.

'No. Why?'

'Because,' I said, 'he alone knows more than we are aware. There is some reason why he preserves silence upon a fact which is of greatest importance to us. Indeed, it is more than likely that were he to relate all he knows we might conclude this inquiry in a few hours.'

'What do you mean?' cried Sir John quickly, in a resentful tone. 'You surely do not charge the Marquess of Macclesfield with concealing some fact to the detriment of his country? This is not like you, Crawford.'

I remembered that the mysterious death of poor Gordon was a secret between the Marquess and myself, and saw that if I pursued the topic further I should be obliged to make some explanation. Therefore I remained silent.

'I can't understand your reason for speaking in this manner,' continued the ambassador, puzzled. 'All that is known at the Foreign Office is known to us. Are we not in hourly communication with Downing Street?'

I admitted that we were, but pointed out that no assistance had been given us in the prosecution of the inquiry. The despatch-box from which the file of papers had been stolen had been returned, and was in a cupboard opposite where I stood.

'They rely entirely upon us, Crawford,' the Minister replied. 'I am not satisfied. We are not sufficiently active in the matter.'

This observation angered me. Since the theft had become known I had left no stone unturned

to fathom the mystery. I had, by constantly seeking the society of the French and Russian attachés, personal friends of mine and rather good fellows, learned a good deal of the undercurrents in progress, yet no word had been dropped to cause me to suspect that they were in the secret of the theft.

In a Continental capital there are many mysterious ways by which the shrewd diplomatist can ascertain what is in the wind; and as that had been part of my duty for the past five years, I was pretty well versed in the art of learning our opponents' business.

'I own myself baffled in this matter,' I answered quietly. 'Nevertheless, the course of my inquiries must be patient and diligent. I shall not fail through inactivity, I can assure you.'

'Ah, no, Crawford!' he exclaimed quickly. 'Do not misunderstand me. I am, perhaps, too impatient. Work on, and remember that you are working to clear your country's honour.'

Glancing at the other bulky packet, he tossed it into a drawer. Its envelope showed that the papers were unimportant ones, and the second secretary of legation would deal later with them. Again he re-read those uneven lines of writing, scribbled by the hand that controlled England's destiny; then, striking a vesta, he lit the despatch at the corner and held it until it was consumed. The secret correspondence from the Marquess to the various ambassadors of the Queen is always destroyed immediately, as some of it might prove extremely compromising.

I lunched at home at my rooms, and at four that afternoon strolled down to the Café Métropole, the fine, handsomely decorated place on the Boulevard Anspach, for there I was almost certain to meet somebody or other I knew. A good many of the diplomatic circle lounge there in the afternoon, for of late it has become the cosmopolitan rendezvous of Brussels, even more so than the café of the Grand Hotel opposite. I was not disappointed, for as I entered I was hailed by Paul Yermoloff, the second secretary of the Russian Legation, a dark-moustached, good-looking man of forty, who was sitting at one of the little tables smoking with his colleague Gregorovitch, the honorary attaché.

'Ah, my dear Crawford!' the first-named cried, extending his hand. 'Late to-day. Do the difficulties of England require so much adjustment that you cannot get down to the Boulevards at the usual hour?'

'No,' I laughed, seating myself in the third chair, and taking the cigarette he offered. 'Truth to tell, I've had a siesta.'

'The British lion has been napping,' laughed Gregorovitch.

'It isn't often he has a nap,' I said; 'but to-day, with this overcast weather—phew!'

'And after late hours last night, and the pretty Princess Mélanie,' Yermoloff added.

At mention of her name I felt my face suffusing. Then their lynx eyes had not failed to notice me with her. I had no wish to be chaffed about her; but to resent it would be, I knew, to show my hand.

'Why, what about the Princess?' I asked, with affected innocence.

'Nothing. Only she's very beautiful,' responded Yermoloff. 'We've just been speaking of her, and congratulating you upon your taste.'

'Yes,' I said. 'There can be no two opinions regarding her beauty. Does she often come to Brussels?'

'Twice a year,' he answered. 'But take my advice, my dear fellow, and don't have very much to do with her.'

'Why?'

'Serge will tell you; he knows her best,' answered the Russian, who was at one and the same time my personal friend and my diplomatic enemy.

'Well,' exclaimed Gregorovitch, stroking his blonde moustache with a rather foppish air, 'I do happen to know something of Her Highness, and what I know of her isn't very creditable.'

'Tell me,' I exclaimed, intensely interested.

The two men exchanged glances, the meaning of which remained to me a mystery, although I did not fail to notice it.

'Well,' the other answered, 'she's rather fond of taking up a man for a week or so, and then giving him the cut direct, or else bringing him into public derision. She is lovely; but, a royalty as she is, she is aware of the exact estimate of her beauty. By the Virgin! Why, there isn't a prouder woman in the whole of the Courts of Europe than Mélanie of Hapsburg.'

What he alleged might be true, but I certainly had found her the very reverse of proud.

'I don't think there's much fear that she'll take me up,' I laughed lightly. 'Men in the diplomatic circle are too small a fry.'

'Ah, no; you're mistaken,' Gregorovitch said. 'There was an incident in Berlin when I was there which didn't altogether enhance her worth in the eyes of those who knew the truth. She flirted outrageously with young Prince Ostrovsky, one of the honorary attachés of our Embassy; and when one day, at a garden-party given by the Empress, he grew affectionate and spoke to her of love, she flew into a sudden passion, and denounced poor Ostrovsky before about a dozen people, including the Empress herself. So overwhelmed with shame and chagrin was the unfortunate attaché that he resigned at once, and went back to St Petersburg.'

'I have heard,' I said, 'that she has a secret lover somewhere.'

'Of course,' answered Yermoloff. 'That's well known. According to common gossip, she meets him at night somewhere along the Boulevard Waterloo. It is said that she's been seen with

him lately, and that he's a shabby-genteel, hulking, ruffianly-looking fellow.'

'Quite romantic,' I laughed.

'Romantic!' ejaculated Gregorovitch, who seemed somehow to hold her in abhorrence. 'Two or three men I know are laying their heads together to watch for the mysterious lover and find out who he really is. It would be interesting to know.'

I pricked my ears at this statement. If this were so, then I must warn her.

'Rather good fun,' I said, smiling. 'Is he supposed to be a German or Belgian?'

'Nobody knows,' replied my companion. 'That's just what we want to find out.'

'But has she actually been seen with him?' I inquired.

'Most certainly. When she was here six months ago the same story was about. The Baroness de Melreux has actually seen them together.'

'And you believe her?' I asked, deprecatingly. I remembered the Princess's words regarding that irresponsible butterfly of fashion.

'My dear fellow,' said Gregorovitch, raising his shoulders slightly, 'the Baroness is always good fun, even if she's given to slight exaggerations of the truth.'

'You put it politely,' I laughed. 'No, my dear Gregorovitch, one should always take the statements of the merry little Baroness in homeopathic doses and with the proverbial grain of salt. She's always full of some scandal or other.'

'Scandal which generally turns out to have some foundation in fact,' Yermoloff remarked.

'Then you really believe in this story of a secret lover?' I observed.

'There seems little doubt about it,' my friend replied. 'But why are you so anxious, my dear Crawford? Surely you haven't fallen a victim to her charms? She looked lovely last night in blue; dazzling enough to bewitch any man.'

'No fear. I'm too old a diplomat,' I assured him. I saw that in order to disarm the suspicion of these men I must act with extreme caution and finesse. It was to my interest to retain their friendship, for from them I often gathered very valuable facts. They were a pair of self-conceited, foppish gallants who, in their boastful moments, frequently told me things which were of greatest use to us at our Legation. Times without number had I carefully led the conversation up to the political crisis, but had at each time become convinced that they knew nothing of the theft of that file of correspondence, otherwise they must have uttered some boast or other, and thus betrayed their knowledge. Their belief in the supremacy of Russia was sublime. But why, I wondered, did they both speak of the Princess with such ill-will?

I smoked on, chatting still upon the same subject. They took a keen delight in chaffing me about my long talk with her and our dance together, declaring that I, like all the rest, had

fallen deeply in love with her. Against this allegation, of course, I protested strongly. She had treated me with common courtesy, I said, and I had merely returned it. I laughed heartily at their suggestion that I was in love with her, and in return declared that they were both jealous that she should have singled me out for notice.

'No, don't think that, my dear Crawford,' Yermoloff answered in his soft, easy way, smiling through the cigarette-smoke. 'On the contrary, I should regret very much if she were to endeavour to patronise me, for I really fear I should be rude to her.'

'Why?'

But he shrugged his shoulders with that expressive air of mystery which a Russian can assume at will, and his mouth remained closed. Neither would explain the cause of their extreme antagonism. But the fact was plain. For some inexplicable reason they hated her.

At six o'clock we rose and went forth on to the Boulevard again. It was pleasant there in the sunset hour. Men were crying the *Soir* and the *Indépendance*, and the hand-barrows advertising the café concerts were being trundled slowly by. My companions hailed a cab, and were driven away to the Gare du Nord, where

they were to meet a friend; while I strolled along to the Bourse, where I could obtain a tram that would set me down outside my own rooms in the Place Louise, for the open trams in Brussels are in summer even more pleasant than the fiacres.

Outside the Bourse, at the street corner, I halted to buy a paper at the kiosk, when a man passed me whose figure in an instant struck me as familiar. I looked after him. He was well dressed, above the average height, and wore a silk hat and frock-coat, which gave him the stamp of a business man. The face was rather a full one, with a fair, pointed beard, ruddy cheeks, and eyes a trifle strange in their expression. He wore, I thought, a curious, inquisitive look as he passed me. Then suddenly I recollected. That man had been sitting alone near us in the café, and possibly, if he understood English, had overheard some part of our conversation. But at the same moment that this fact became impressed upon me, another, still stranger, caused me to hold my breath in wonder. The silhouette was identical. He was the man who, so silent and plainly clad, had passed through the Moorish lounge at the Palace on the previous night. He was the unexpected stranger whom the Princess Mélanie held in such mortal dread.

OUTDOOR CURE OF CONSUMPTION AT FALKENSTEIN.

[AN article upon 'The Open-air Treatment of Consumption,' by a medical man, appeared in this *Journal* last year, in which the method of treatment at Nordach Sanatorium, in the Black Forest, is described in detail. The following brief narrative, by a gentleman who accompanied a patient to Falkenstein, supplies further information on the subject from the point of view of a lay observer.]



WAS offered the opportunity of accompanying a friend to an institution in the Taunus Mountains for the alleviation or cure of consumption by what is popularly known as the outdoor treatment.

It may be interesting to many to learn the views and impressions of one—not a patient—who has been there.

Falkenstein, where the institution or sanatorium is, stands high in the mountains, about seven miles north of Frankfort, and two miles from the nearest railway station, Cronsberg.

The institution stands on the side of a hill, well sheltered from all rough winds; indeed, quite an extraordinary and outstanding feature of the neighbourhood is the almost entire absence of wind. Like almost all the little towns of Germany, Falkenstein boasts its castle set up on

the nearest hill; and many a time, when the flag thereon was blowing out full, the one attached to the institution was hanging quite limp.

During the four days I was there, in the end of October, the weather was remarkably fine, and all the Sunday one could lie on the benches outside, basking in the sun, and apparently quite safely, even without an overcoat. The whole expanse of sky was one huge dome of blue; but immediately the sun got behind the hill we had to shift under cover quickly, as the air soon became quite chilly.

We arrived on a Thursday evening, and had capital rooms allotted to us; next we saw the business manager, who arranged when the doctors' examination could take place—a good deal depending on that; and, after a good wash up after our journey, we joined the other patients and visitors in what youngsters would call 'a jolly good dinner.'

The medical examination next morning was a trial to my friend, as none of the four doctors present were proficient in English, and we knew no German. So we had sometimes a difficulty in arriving at a mutual understanding.

The treatment or cure is extremely simple, and I believe, if taken in time, will be quite effectual. The patients must, however, give careful attention

and obedience to all instructions, or leave the institution.

The routine is as follows: First, soon after 7 A.M. the patient gets a thorough dry rubbing—slight massage; and, after a rest, all are expected to be down in the dining-hall for breakfast between a quarter to eight and a quarter past eight. This meal is the only simple one of the day—a true breakfast: coffee, tea, and hot milk, with rolls and butter.

Then, according to the length of residence and strength, comes gentle exercise. The first week you are expected to walk for about fifteen minutes once a day. But if there is some improvement during that time you may have to walk fifteen minutes twice a day, gradually increasing until you can walk some hours without serious fatigue.

After your walk or exercise you go to a kiosk, stretch out on a couch, get comfortably and warmly wrapped up, and rest until time for the next meal, which is at ten o'clock. This is a real solid meal, in which you get various kinds of fish and butcher-meat; and at all meals you are expected to drink at least two large tumblers of milk.

You then return to your couch, and spend the forenoon as best you may, conversation about cases being debarred. A good deal of letter-writing is done; and as there is a splendid library, you need never be without a book to interest you. English patients are encouraged to spend some time in learning German, which makes matters easier for them and their attendants.

I should like to state here that at no institution I have visited have I ever found more careful attention, better-cooked food, or a greater variety.

Lunch comes at one o'clock; and along with your food you are encouraged—or at any rate not discouraged—to drink a good deal of light wine, both white and red.

A long afternoon has to be passed; so those who are moderately well have the best of it, as they can go rambling about the beautiful grounds, between thirty and forty acres in extent, the walks, laid with sharp gravel, being thoroughly dry.

Then, about four o'clock, the patient can get a cup of tea or milk.

Dinner—just an elaboration of lunch—at half-past seven, is generally the most social meal of the day. They have a practice of putting on the table at lunch and dinner a large variety of stewed fruits, not as dessert but as an appetiser; and those dishes are usually the first cleared. Our part of the table was set aside for the English contingent, and served by an attendant who had spent some time in London, so we got along very comfortably.

Shortly before dinner the mail comes in, and provides the one mild excitement of the day, or,

as a friend described it—he had hardly got acclimatised—‘an oasis in the desert.’ What is attempted is to feed you well and rest you well; and I know of no better arrangements for arriving at such a result.

The veranda in front of the house stretches out to about a hundred and fifty feet, and the couches are so numerous that only space is left between each for a person to move. When at first the visitor goes about among the patients he wonders if he has wandered into a smoking-saloon, where both ladies and gentlemen indulge in fragrant cigarettes. However, as no smoke is apparent, he must find some other explanation—namely, that each has a natty little glass thermometer in the mouth; and whatever the temperature—favourable or otherwise—it has to be carefully marked on the chart three or four times daily. There are also quite a number of separate kiosks of various sizes, to hold from two up to twenty-five persons; and you are given your place when you arrive, and keep it until you leave.

Every one is expected to retire early, and the place is usually as quiet as a church by ten o'clock.

I have the prospectus of the institution lying before me, the first paragraph of which runs:

‘The Sanatorium of Falkenstein was founded in 1874 through the efforts of some Frankfort physicians, with a view of creating in Western Germany, in a healthy mountainous region, easy of access, an establishment for the treatment of patients suffering from diseases of the lungs, to be kept open during the entire year. The inauguration took place in the spring of 1876. The capital necessary for the enterprise had been subscribed principally by wealthy citizens of Frankfort under the condition that the yearly dividend should not exceed five per cent., and that any surplus beyond this rate should be used in the first place for desirable improvements, and then, as soon as the surplus means would permit, for the founding and maintaining a sanatorium for poor consumptives.’

Another is: ‘The climate is essentially that of all central Germany. Its main advantage is its pure mountain air, free from dust; all the drives leading to the establishment describing a wide circle. The atmosphere is rather dry, though rain is not wanting. The variations of temperature are rarely very considerable or sudden at Falkenstein, and there is no perceptible fall of temperature at sunset.

‘The prices of the establishment for patients, and persons accompanying them, are as follows: (1) Rooms, including heating and electric-light (portable lamps excepted), according to size and location, from one shilling to seven shillings and sixpence per day; (2) charges for board, attendance, and medical care, and general lighting of the localities in common use (without extra charge

for heating or disinfection), eight shillings and sixpence per day.'

After spending four delightful days, I left on Monday morning at ten o'clock, and had a very curious impression of the atmosphere. I felt as if, instead of rising, the thermometer was falling some degrees for each hundred feet we descended. At the institution, which is thirteen hundred feet above the sea, I was quite warm, and started without an overcoat; but by the time we arrived at the railway station, probably five hundred or six hundred feet down, one was very glad to put on extra clothing. I suspect the impression was wrong; but certainly we felt out of the reach of the hoar-frost when high up.

There are a variety of ways of reaching Frankfort, and any one going there would be quite safe to leave himself in Cook's hands. We left London by the half-past eight train for Harwich, for the Hook of Holland, and thence *via* Rotterdam, Venlo, Cologne, Bingen, Mainz, &c., and got to Frankfort at half-past four next day. One advantage of this route is that you are on the sea during the night.

Both going and coming we were very much charmed by the magnificent Rhine scenery. After leaving flat and watery Holland one could easily fancy one's self in Forfarshire, with these differences, that the cultivation was not so far advanced

and the fields were not fenced. A good deal of ground must be wasted through its being broken up into such small patches; and such a thing as a stackyard was not to be seen. If the background of the hills was removed while you were walking between Falkenstein and Königstein, fancy would almost make you imagine you were in Warwickshire. A practice obtains on most of the country roads which our county councillors in Scotland might adopt with great advantage. Where roads diverge you find a small board stuck up, or, failing that, the telegraph-poles are used, to give travellers directions in the following way: A dab of paint about the size of the thumb is placed opposite a name—as, *green*, Cronsberg; *blue*, Falkenstein; *red*, Heilanstalt; *yellow*, Königstein. So, when you again come to a split in the road, the colour gives you the clue. This must be much the most economical finger-post.

Altogether our visit to Falkenstein is a most pleasurable memory.

Since writing the above I have received a letter from my friend, dated 13th December, in which he says: 'In fact, I think I have improved more this last week than all the time I have been here; and I have actually gained two and a half pounds in a week. I am not now such a weak, wheezy old wreck as when you saw me last. Decidedly better.'

QUENTIN HARCOURT, Q.C.: HIS LOVE STORY.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER III.



FEW days later Quentin Harcourt received a visit from his sister in his chambers. The event was so unusual that for the moment he felt alarmed, and asked anxiously if she had any bad news.

'None; but I am bursting with what I have to tell. No, thanks, dear; don't trouble yourself to send out your clerk for tea. I have accepted your hospitality before, and know he brings it from the A.B.C. shop round the corner. You ought to marry, Quentin.'

'But if I did, my wife would not live here and educate us above our opportunities,' he answered, withdrawing his hand from a curious antique bell which stood amongst his papers. 'You have not come here, Dolly, to tell me that; let me hear your news. I am on tenter-hooks.'

'Watson has come back,' she announced solemnly.

'I am delighted; then Richard's himself again. I conclude your clever parlour-maid is leaving you?'

'It is simply about her I have come to talk to you. Who do you think she turns out to be? You will remember I always told you she was a lady in disguise.'

Her brother smiled, but offered no protest, while she continued with great animation:

'You must understand that she is not going to leave me after all. Dolly was heart-broken at the prospect, and so Hester asked if I should be willing for her to stay as her companion-governess, and to help me as a daughter. I don't mean she put it quite in that way; I suggested the relationship.'

'Ah!' said Quentin patiently; 'but you have not yet told me who Hester is.'

'She is Miss Sartoris, daughter of that Colonel Sartoris who was killed at Cabul with poor Louis Cavnagari—you remember?—and niece of Sir Robert Shaw. It seems that she and her uncle had a desperate quarrel, to the extent of his positively turning her out of doors, and in her distress she went to her old nurse, who is Watson's eldest sister; and between them they hatched this extraordinary scheme. Hester says she could be very happy as a parlour-maid. Strange—isn't it?'

'I presume it depends upon whose parlour she serves. You are always good to your servants, Dolly. But has she told you what she and her uncle quarrelled about?'

'My dear Quentin, when young people quarrel

with their natural guardians it is invariably about their lovers. Hester is a soldier's daughter, and only a soldier can please her. She is in love with that young Fleming who won his captaincy the other day at Chitral; the papers were full of it. They became secretly engaged before he went to India; but she kept her own counsel until Sir Robert was bent on her marrying some one else. When he found she was obstinate he took this extraordinary course of action, and shut his doors against her. To refuse Lord Molineux on behalf of a beggarly lieutenant deserved nothing less.'

'Lord Molineux! I know him; a very nice fellow and most unexceptionable *parti*. Why, he is neither old nor ugly nor depraved, which I always understood were the traditional characteristics of husbands selected by hard-hearted guardians to supersede love's young dream; Miss Sartoris must be hard to please. I almost think she deserved her fate.'

'Ah, you are a crabbed old lawyer, and have no sympathy with the tender passion! The girl was engaged already, and was very much in love; besides, at twenty-four she is independent, and can marry whom she pleases.'

Quentin stroked his chin meditatively.

'I have often wondered,' he said, 'what curious instinct it is which determines these nice points of choice and preference. To my mind, Molineux is worth a dozen Flemings.'

'Do you know Captain Fleming too?' asked Lady Northwick, surprised. 'I saw him the other day. He came at my invitation to see Hester, and I thought him charming.'

Quentin shrugged his shoulders.

'I allow he has superficial advantages; he is well set up, as soldiers are apt to be, and rejoices in blue eyes and a flaxen moustache on a face tanned to the colour of umber. I have learned from one of the most popular of your lady novelists that these are points of physical perfection.'

Lady Northwick laughed.

'I fancy you are a little out of train to-day,' she said, preparing for departure; 'but at all events come and see Miss Sartoris in her new character. You will please quite understand that, as the advertisements say, she is treated now in all respects as one of the family. It is a treat to see how happy she makes Dolly.'

She kissed the tips of her fingers to him in playful salute, and departed.

It will not surprise any student of average human nature that the strong fancy conceived by Quentin Harcourt for his sister's parlour-maid was powerfully strengthened, not only by the knowledge that no social barrier subsisted between them, but also by the fact that she was not free to be wooed and won. It is only a fox that pronounces the grapes out of reach to be sour.

He did go and see her, as his sister suggested,

and they fell into discourse about Dolly, and the best modes of education for a child so precocious and excitable. The discussion sent him away wondering at the insight and wisdom of a girl who at twenty-two seemed to have reflected profoundly upon one of the deepest problems of all time—the right and healthy development of a human soul. He found too, as he had suspected, that she was no mean scholar, but had succeeded in already imbuing her pupil with an enthusiasm for the Eton Grammar as a stepping-stone to the *Odyssey*; also that she had drawn her tale of the Argonauts from the fountain-head of the Greek poets.

His deep interest in the welfare of his charming little niece caused these visits to become frequent, so that he had the opportunity of seeing Hester under different aspects. Lady Northwick, to use her own phrase, had fallen over head and ears in love with her; and, as her romantic story became known, society was anxious to make a pet and a lion of a girl so attractive. But Hester graciously but firmly declined all invitations, and made it to be understood that she preferred to stick to her rôle of governess, and to fulfil the duties she had accepted, without excitement or distraction.

Quentin, as he watched and waited, felt increasingly that he would never find another woman so qualified to meet his exigence and stir his heart as this *fiancée* of young Jack Fleming.

Here lay the crux. He was too honourable to wish to oust his rival; but he was free to deplore that he should have a rival, and one so inadequate!

Fleming was an honest, gallant young fellow, as was any one of his brother-officers scattered over the face of the habitable globe, capable of walking up to an open battery at command or of leading a forlorn-hope without flinching. But these soldierly qualities do not come into play in the prose of everyday life, or prove sufficient for intellectual companionship with a woman who was head and shoulders his superior. She would find this out in the long-run, and then it would become a point of duty with her to deny and starve the higher faculties of her mind in the loyal attempt to preserve the marital equilibrium. Can a harder fate befall any woman?

Quentin's previsions were so acute and vivid as seriously to interfere with his peace of mind. He resolved not to see her so often, the more especially as when he dropped in at the house unexpectedly he often found the ground already occupied by Captain Fleming, leaving him without a chance of discourse or discussion.

It was now August, and the Long Vacation was close at hand. He would betake himself to distant travel, and cool his passion, say, in Canada or Iceland; but before his departure he must bid his sister and Dolly good-bye.

On the afternoon of his call for this purpose

he found a rather unusual condition of things—Lady Northwick was out, and had taken Dolly with her. Quentin hesitated, then asked, 'Was Miss Sartoris at home? If so he would leave a message with her;' and in a few moments he was in her presence, and alone with her for the first time.

She was knitting a Lilliputian jersey for a handsome sailor-doll already otherwise clad by her needlework; and, somehow, the thing pleased Quentin. He knew all her gifts and accomplishments; and her evident interest in her pretty occupation, with a view to Dolly's delight, seemed to suggest those homely and womanly qualities without which he would have held either Sappho or Corinna incomplete representations of their sex. It had also the undesirable effect of softening the rigour of his purpose of self-repression; but then it must be conceded that Hester was looking bewilderingly charming in her cool white gown.

'Fresh as Aphrodite!' he said to himself; and to her he began immediately to explain the motive of his visit.

'How they will miss you!' she said; 'but of course after a term's hard work you must stand in need of a holiday.'

'They?' he repeated a little fatuously. 'Not we?'

She looked a little surprised.

'I might most sincerely have said *we*,' was her answer, 'if I had not feared to be thought presumptuous. How could it be otherwise when you have been so kind to me, Mr Harcourt?'

'Kind! That word, Miss Sartoris, implies favours bestowed *de haut en bas*, and can't, therefore, fit our relations; but, granting that I have been kind, you have unwittingly made me a bad return for my kindness.'

'How?' she asked quietly.

'I don't overlook the wise and tender care you have taken of the child we all love so dearly, nor your affectionate attentions to my sister, which have made life so pleasant to her of late; but I complain that you have done me a mischief. You have shown me what I thought I should never see—a woman nobly endowed in body and mind, and yet simple and sincere. I was fool enough to love you before I knew you; and, knowing you, my folly justified itself a thousandfold. The desire of my heart is to have been able to win you for my wife.'

She had put down her work and risen; her

cheeks, which had grown pale, heightening the kindled animation of her eyes.

'You say this to me,' she asked, 'when you know that I am pledged, both by love and duty, to Captain Fleming! It is not what I should have expected of you, Mr Harcourt.'

The note of indignation softened with the last words. She saw how very much in earnest he was, and she was not so unnatural a woman as to find it hard to forgive a man for the crime of loving her.

'It is not what I expected of myself,' was his answer. 'My intention was to go away and try to pull up this—this madness by its roots. But then I did not know that I should find you alone, or the feebleness of my good resolutions. Forgive me—Hester!'

He stopped, and the girl sat down again with head averted, and a flush on the beautiful face that had been pale before. She had made a little gesture of restraint when he called her by her name; but Quentin was not readily silenced. He took up his parable again, speaking with perfect self-command but under strong feeling.

'I claim to be forgiven, Miss Sartoris, for I am going away all the same holding fast to my purpose. But, just for a few moments—Captain Fleming can well afford me so much grace—I ask you to try and conceive what our lives might have been if neither love nor honour had stood between us and I could have found my way to your heart. Dear,' he added, with an inflection hard to resist, 'I believe I could have made you very happy.'

Under the strong compulsion of his influence she did try to conceive it, and, for a moment, the shadow of a misgiving crossed her mind, to be dispersed the next by the return tide of her loyalty and love.

'I am very sorry that you feel like this,' she said softly. 'You have not known me long. I pray God you may forget me soon.'

He got up to go, for there was nothing more to be said; and he was afraid of Lady Northwick and Dolly breaking in upon the pain and awkwardness of the scene.

He took her hand and put it to his lips with his grave, half-humorous smile.

'Such privileges are granted to those who part to meet, perhaps, no more. God bless you, Hester, in the way that you have chosen; but I shall go to my grave regretting that He did not put your blessedness into my hands to fulfil.'



PRACTICAL HINTS IN HOUSEHOLD MANAGEMENT.

By the Author of *Matthew Dale, Farmer.*



It may be premised that household management is not an art that can be taken up at a moment's notice. It comes by dearly-bought experience, either of our own or of others. It is, therefore, hoped the following remarks may afford some useful hints to young beginners, and indicate, rather than specify, some of the causes that go to make of their best attempts a miserable failure.

In the good old days of our grandmothers notable housewives were the rule, as they are now the exception. Every detail of home-life was carried on within the house—brewing, baking, pickling, preserving, curing, clothing, &c. 'We live beside ourselves' was how they expressed it, as they pointed with pardonable pride to the sides of bacon, the goodly hams, the strings of onions, and the hanks of homespun yarn that adorned their rafters.

How few of us 'live beside ourselves' now! Every commodity of household use must be bought and paid for, and thrift of the good old-fashioned kind is at a discount. Fifty years ago the buxom maidens of the farms supplied themselves with 'lily-white sand' chopped by their own strong arms, and with that and a wisp of straw they made their boards, from the kitchen-table downwards, as white as the caps they did not wear, but only put on for special work. Nowadays the victimised mistress has to supply Monkey Brand soap, and cocoa-fibre brushes, and so on all along the line. Thrift of time, thrift of material, thrift of mind, and thrift of body do not enter into modern calculation; and therein lies the crux of the situation. No longer do we find gentlewomen seated among their young dependants, busy with the distaff and the needle, or, like Nausicaa (a king's daughter), superintending the laving and bleaching of the household linen. Now the mistress is on the golf-course or the tennis-lawn; the daughters are playing hockey or cricket; the servants are either making holiday, according to their light, or counting the hours till the weekly 'night out' comes round; and the house is left to housekeep itself!

What can be expected of young people brought up in such homes but that their own houses, when they attain to the dignity of housewives, will be conducted in like fashion? What can they know of the rules of hygiene or dietetics or sanitation? And yet how important is it, for the well-being of the household, that she who is at the head should have some knowledge of these particulars! Strictly speaking, a girl has no

right to assume the cares of a house till she has graduated in housekeeping and taken honours! If not, she is a fraud to begin with; and a parent or guardian who puts an untrained girl into a man's hands as a helpmeet is, to say the least of it, an aider and abettor. Ignorance of this kind is particularly disastrous in a working-man's house, for there the wife is both mistress and servant; but even in middle-class households no woman is fit to be a mistress till she has seen service—that is, till she knows the why and the wherefore of all domestic economy, and can give a reason for the faith that is in her. She will then be able to instruct any younger person with whom she may come in contact, and show her how work should be done, or do it herself as occasion arises. Then will the young mistress be independent of the vagaries of her maids, and be able to grant them the oft-recurring holiday without materially interfering with the comfort of her family.

There is no department of household management that tries the care and skill of the anxious housewife more thoroughly than dietetics. It may truly be called a science, and should be cultivated for higher ends than the mere satisfying of appetite. It embraces the supply of the elements necessary for the growth and development of the human frame, as well as the reparation of the waste continually going on in the system. Therefore, how to best build up a strong and healthy body should be the end and aim of all gastronomic effort; for we eat to live—only the glutton and the gourmand live to eat!

Food either predisposes to disease, or helps to ward it off (firstly) by its direct influence on the system, and (secondly) by enabling it to repel the attacks of those deadly germs that, under the name of bacteria, bacilli, &c., are ever seeking for a nest or nidus in which to lay their life-destroying progeny. In slight ailments doctors' bills might often be saved by a due attention to diet. For example, fine bread, eggs, pastry, and all highly concentrated food produce constipation; while unbolted meal, oatmeal porridge, ripe fruit, stewed fruits and vegetables remove it. Rich, greasy food gives rise to bilious attacks; a plain, simple diet will hold them in check. Pulmonary complaints, in which there is a wasting of the tissues, should be met by an extra supply of heat-producing and fat-forming food; it would, therefore, appear advisable, in cases where a tendency to that complaint, either inherited or induced, is to be suspected, to meet the evil at once by a diet of such carbonaceous substances as

the system will assimilate—among which may be mentioned various preparations of suet (which is both light and nourishing), and milk which has not been deprived of its fat-globules, commonly called cream.

It is now pretty well understood that bad feeding and consequent poverty of blood creates a craving for ardent spirits in those to whom the necessities of life come only in inadequate supply. When the working-man's wife has learned the value of a good hot meal for a tired, hungry man, and knows how to prepare it, there may be less need of temperance associations and liquor licensing laws. There is reason to hope that the cooking lessons now included in the School Board curriculum may effect an improvement in the dietary of the working-classes; for there is little doubt that in many such homes it has not been so much the want of material as the want of skill to turn what was at hand to good account. In the course of time, too, the instructions the young scholars are receiving in the industrial departments ought to make them more efficient servants as well as housewives, a consummation devoutly to be desired by employers, as hitherto there has been no branch of culture, excepting domestic service, where some kind of apprenticeship has not been required, and where the doubtful pleasure of teaching has been conjoined with the penalty of paying for incapacity and sometimes hopeless stupidity!

Every article of diet has relatively a higher or lower value as nutriment, and a knowledge of such qualities should be helpful to the housekeeper who aims at providing the best forms of sustenance. In many households there is often a waste of animal food under the mistaken idea that it yields the most nutriment. A soup made of a mixture of meat and vegetables is richer in flesh-forming and heat-producing qualities than when made of equal weight of meat alone; and some of the seeds of the leguminous plants, such as lentils, form the basis of a most nourishing soup well adapted for children and old people, neither of whom should indulge in a diet in which animal food preponderates. Where economy requires to be studied this fact should prove of great value; but even in the houses of the wealthy vegetable stock is taking the place of the old-fashioned stock-pot, and is much used in the preparation of the delicate vegetable soups and entremets which are gradually coming into favour at well-appointed dinner-tables, bidding fair to become as popular here as they have long been in France.

Many vegetables are highly medicinal, being both antiscorbutic and aperient. Potatoes are an invaluable article of diet, but, from their starchy character, require to be combined with other food. Turnips contain a high percentage of water, and are probably the least concentrated of all the vegetable class; while cabbage, onion, and cauli-

flower yield a high proportion of gluten, and are consequently rich in flesh-forming material.

Beef is more nourishing than mutton, but the latter is easier of digestion, and also less irritating to the intestines. Lamb and veal, and indeed all immature meats, are indigestible, though that may be overcome in measure by thorough cooking; they are also deficient in osmazome, which is the flavour and perfume that we find in good soup and roasted meat. Pork, either fresh or cured, has not much to recommend it excepting the fact that it is liked by many people, and any viand that goes with the taste and so promotes the flow of the gastric juices—in common parlance 'making the mouth water'—will be most likely to agree well with the stomach.

Game, more particularly feathered game, is both digestible and nutritious; French doctors order it for invalids in preference to chicken, though chicken-soup will always be, as it has been in the past, a standard sick-room dish.

The different kinds of fish show a wide diversity in their muscine and fatty properties; but most of them afford a fair amount of nutritive food. Salmon is difficult of digestion; but white fish is light and nourishing, and well suited to those who cannot assimilate animal food. It has been remarked that people who subsist chiefly on fish are pale-complexioned, as the elements of which it consists are not calculated to enrich the blood.

Wheat, when properly treated, yields a large percentage of nourishment; but English housekeepers, by insisting on fine white bread, deprive the wheat-flour of some of its most valuable properties; while, if they would use, or encourage the bakers to use, unbolted meal, they might, with greater certainty, feel they were subsisting on 'the staff of life.' The bran of wheat contains 18 per cent. of gluten, and fine flour contains only 10 per cent. It thus appears that its nourishing qualities are reduced about one-third; and, besides, the bone-forming material is almost entirely thrown away, which, in the case of growing children, is a serious consideration. But for the young there is no safer diet than oatmeal made into porridge; beyond all question it is the best of food. It is so rich in gluten and other nutritious substances as to form a substitute for flesh-meat, and so strong in phosphates or bone-forming material as to leave nothing to be desired. A child brought up on porridge and milk (other things being equal) will be healthier and stronger than one fed on the most carefully arranged diet; for oatmeal in itself embraces all the constituents for building up a strong and healthy frame, and children fed on it should be rich-blooded, strong-boned, full-fleshed, and of great stamina.

Of milk by itself, as an article of diet, it is hardly possible to speak too highly. Well will it be for our country should it become a 'land flowing with milk' at a price that will bring it

within the reach of all; for there is no requisite so well calculated to nourish the young frame. According to statistics gathered in Lancashire, children fed on milk have, about the age of thirteen, been known to grow fifteen pounds in the year, while at the same age those fed on tea and coffee have not made more than four pounds in the same time. Milk has two disadvantages: firstly, there is no food, either liquid or solid, so easily contaminated by noxious germs; and, secondly, whole milk, to pay the dairyman, must be sold at a price all but prohibitive among the poorer classes. An attempt is made to meet the first disadvantage by pasteurising or sterilising; and in competent hands the process may be said to be successful, as it is now found to be effectual under the boiling-point; but when the process is carried on at home, and the liquid is permitted to reach that point, its delicate flavour is very much lost, and even its nourishing properties are said to go too. With regard to the second disadvantage, thanks to the separator, milk merely deprived of its fat-globules can now be distributed at a moderate price; and being perfectly sweet, and free from either lactic acid or fermentation, is still a valuable article of diet, though its fatty matter has been extracted.

Cookery and civilisation go hand in hand. As the one progresses so does the other. In the primitive ages our forefathers ate their flesh-meat raw. *Hudibras* speaks of a man as needlessly choice about his dinner who made a saddle of his saddle of mutton, and after riding on it for a few hours, till thoroughly warmed, sat down to the luxury of a dish cooked to a turn. We find also in the *Essays of Elia* a grotesque account of the first discovery of such dainties as roast-pig and crackling, which *may*, perhaps, be founded on fact. A French writer on cookery, speaking of raw meat, naively remarks: 'Raw meat has one inconvenience—it sticks in the teeth; but with this exception, seasoned with a little salt, it is not disagreeable to taste, it digests easily, and must be more nourishing than cooked food.'

But as there are two ways of doing everything, so also there is cooking and cooking. There is the overdoing and the underdoing, and there is also the happy mean—the doing to a turn. To overdo animal food is simply to waste it—to extract the juices and leave only tasteless fibre; while, on the other hand, to undercook vegetable matter is not only to make it indigestible but unpalatable.

The frequent failures in stewing and boiling generally arise from the processes being carried on too quickly. 'Boiled to rags' is the miserable but graphic description of a piece of meat that, instead of simmering gently over a slow fire, is kept bobbing furiously up and down in the pot, the savoury steam driven up the chimney, carry-

ing with it the nourishing and relishing properties that, under better management, would have been retained in the meat. All boiled meat should be put on in hot water, to set the albumen and retain the juices. Meat boiled to make soup, or stock, on the contrary, should be put on in cold water to dissolve the osmazome and extract the juices. This rule should be taken notice of and attended to. Not one woman in ten knows how to put meat on to boil—far less the why and the wherefore!

The great art in cooking animal food is to apply the heat, whether wet or dry, so as to fix the albumen, and so coat over the meat at the first. This it is that makes broiling so favourite a method of cooking, for the surface of the meat becoming quickly charred, the evaporation of the juices is retarded and a higher flavour generated. The loss both by boiling and roasting varies so much under different circumstances that there is little satisfaction in recording experience or quoting from tables. About 25 per cent. or one in four is a fair average of loss in roasting under ordinary conditions; while in boiling the loss varies from 6 to 16 per cent.; the lowest percentage being in bacon, and the highest in salt beef; in domestic poultry it averages 15. It thus appears that the loss in roasting far exceeds that by boiling; and when we take into account that the loss by the latter is not actual loss, but that what goes out of the solid is found in the fluid—that is, in the soup—it may be asserted that of the two processes boiling makes the least alteration in value. But for a family of limited means, where the butcher's bill is a serious item, and where the greatest amount of nourishment has to be got out of the smallest modicum of material, stewing is by far the most economical mode of dressing meat. An Irish stew of potato, onion, and neck of mutton, nicely cooked and seasoned, is a capital winter dish for a family dinner. Haricot mutton also, in which carrot, turnip, and parsnip is substituted for potato, is another wholesome and toothsome stew. In fact, stews may be varied indefinitely; and in variety and balance lie the secret of successful catering.

In the scope of a magazine article it is impossible to enter into fuller detail; but it is hoped that these remarks, though they do little more than touch the fringe of the subject, may afford some useful hints to those who can read between the lines. It may probably be considered that recreation has been held too cheap, or even condemned; that is far from being the case. Relaxation of both mind and body is not only commendable but absolutely necessary; and athletic exercises and outdoor amusements, when taken in moderation, safeguard the mental and physical vigour, which is the life of a nation, and which, amid the luxuries of the age, might otherwise be enfeebled. It is the abuse, and not the use, of our recreative amusements that we deprecate. If

we would follow in the steps of worthy Mrs Gilpin, of immortal memory—of whom it is said,

That though on pleasure she was bent,
She had a frugal mind—

we would sweeten our pleasures and resume our

home-duties better fitted for their discharge instead of returning to the domestic hearth too much worn-out for anything harder than the softest of easy-chairs and the lightest of light literature. Thrift should enter into the care of our persons as well as of our purses!

LONDON SPARROWS.

By the Author of *Parrots I have Known*.



MAY as well admit at once that I am extremely ignorant of ornithology. Most of my existence has been passed in London, and it is only from a Cockney point of view that I can venture to record my observations. Of course, like a great many others of my acquaintance, I may say that I have occasionally visited the Natural History Museum, and there enlarged to a small degree my ideas; but it is not of aristocratic birds that I write; no London sparrow is there represented, and he is not in the running at all in those beautiful galleries. From time to time I have added slightly to my knowledge, and can now say with pride that I can distinguish a blackbird from a starling with the utmost precision. No matter how besooted the starling may become by his London residence, I know him; he runs across the grass, and the blackbird hops. I can also recognise the thrush, with his fine figure and speckled shirt, and otherwise important appearance; but all these are, of course, only occasional visitors to our suburban gardens, and not really inhabitants of residential London.

What first drew my attention to the London sparrow was an exceedingly dull time that occurred in our family. Illness was in the house, and necessitated detention in an upper room, with no view beyond a hideous blank brick wall, unrelieved by so much as a single window. The brickwork, like much of the kind in the neighbourhood north of Westbourne Grove, was detestable; but here it was that the advantage came in. The holes which had held the scaffolding-poles in the brickwork had never been filled up, and the sparrows had seen and seized their opportunity, and had taken up their dwellings in the vacant caverns. Then a very interesting drama in sparrow life occurred. We noticed that a large, portly sparrow, of rather extra importance, continually put in an appearance. His occupation in life evidently was to pop in and out of the nests of his brother and sister birds. In and out, in and out, he went, until at last light dawned upon us, and we recognised his mission in life: he was a 'district visitor.' From that time we observed him with profound interest, and I can only hope that the recipients of his

visits did not look upon him in the same ungrateful light as that in which a lady district visitor of our acquaintance was regarded by one who resented her visitations, and designate him, as she was designated, 'a prying cat.'

It is principally in the neighbourhood of Westminster that I have especially noticed the London sparrows. Here they live side by side with the pigeons in Palace Yard, often relieving the weary watch of the policemen on stationary duty, who observe them with keen interest.

I must not forget to mention that there is a marked peculiarity of these birds in this locality: their plumage in many cases is interspersed with white, sometimes a light gray-blue feather appears, and various other shades of colour can distinctly be seen on their coats; but white is the predominant characteristic. Some time ago the *Pall Mall Gazette* drew attention to the white feathers in several of the sparrows frequenting the neighbourhood of Whitehall; one bird almost entirely white I especially noted amusing himself in the gutter outside St Margaret's Church.

In Parliament Square many of the sparrows are marked with white, and here they enjoy themselves in various ways: feeding on biscuits and bread, in the spring picking to pieces the lovely crocuses so charmingly planted in the flower-beds, and flying and perching on the heads and shoulders of the various distinguished statesmen that adorn that classic ground. Most Londoners will remember the great frost in February and March of 1895, that continued for at least six weeks, and also the prolonged and extremely interesting visit the sea-gulls paid to the Metropolis, arriving in a most miserably starved and exhausted condition. Numbers of these birds frequented the Thames all along the Embankment, feeding off the shore at low tide and below the gardens of the House of Lords. Being much interested, I fed them several times with bread, which they often caught before it fell into the water, or picked off the floes of ice which floated up and down the river. Here too, before long, I noticed the omnipresent sparrow, as usual ready to make the most of the opportunity. He invariably managed to get the bread first; and, what was perhaps the most amusing

thing of all, he took pattern from his Arctic friends, and as the gulls stood upon the floes of ice that floated up and down, he cleverly followed their example, and was also wafted on his island of ice up and down old Father Thames, monarch of all he surveyed.

St James's Park is a very happy hunting-ground for sparrows; so much food is given to the beautiful birds in the gardens there, and also thrown into the ornamental water to the various coloured ducks, that they have a plentiful supply of crumbs. I once was a spectator of an amusing scene off the bridge leading to St James's Palace. It was winter, and a sharp frost, the ice having just formed a clear sheet on the water. The ducks, poor things, were out of their element; but of course the good-natured Londoners were, as usual, giving them food. An eager duck, seeing a tempting morsel some yards away, made for it; he slipped, sprawled, and fell, and the ringing peals of laughter from a young boy who was looking on were most infectious. So comical was the sight that after two days I went again; but by this time the birds had improved in their powers of skating. Nevertheless I was rewarded for my second visit by witnessing a sparrow nip in, just as a duck was going for a tempting morsel, and carry it off in triumph in the most aggravating way.

Some years ago a relative of mine resided in a house the back of which overlooked Savile Row; and, being fond of plants, she cultivated a Virginia creeper in a pot. It was always, I thought, rather a poor thing in the horticultural line, and appeared to have rather a hard struggle for existence; but it managed to develop several leaves. Then, alas! the next-door neighbour commenced to keep pigeons, and these had a decided penchant for green meat, and began to devour the poor creeper. Here was an opportunity for the vulgar little London bird. The pigeon came after its salad; and the sparrow—this being the height of his building season—requiring feathers for the nest, watched his opportunity, and, with consummate and unsurpassable impudence, picked a feather out of the back of the pigeon.

Deep and bitter would be my regrets if this most intellectual of birds was to become scarce, and to vanish from our great city. I cannot agree with a learned Oxford Don of my acquaintance who, with bitter sarcasm at the various letters to the daily papers on the advent and habits of the birds of passage that frequent our shores, announces that he shall address a Letter to the Editor of the *Times*, to be inserted in that august paper on the first day of January, informing him that at five that morning he had seen a sparrow, and believed that it was the first instance recorded of a visit from that bird so early in the year. Such bitterness at the sparrow's expense is out of place.

My great consolation is that, when unfeeling fruit-growers and selfish, one-sided, ignorant farmers drive these far-seeing, intelligent birds away from their gardens and agricultural surroundings, they fly up to the town for a more permanent abode, and rejoice in their lofty habitations amongst the varied and unspeakably ugly chimney-pots; and then descend in the daytime from their celestial abodes to the roads, parks, alleys, and gutters, to amuse and cheer us with their unsurpassed impudence. Thus these most British of birds also teach us a lesson of indomitable pluck, the powers of surmounting difficulties, and fearless, dauntless courage.

THREE O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING.

THERE is a time of morning
When the jubilant, new-born day
And the opal tints of approaching dawn
As yet seem far away.
In the eastern sky is movement,
No glow, but impending change.
The house is filled with echoes,
Familiar rooms look strange.
Slip back the bolts and leave them,
Steal out beneath the sky,
Stand alone in an unknown world
Of awful purity.

Stand alone with folded hands,
Wait for the gift of wings;
Wait to be lifted higher,
Nearer the heart of things!

The heavens are clear and moonlit,
Though the moon is on the wane;
The wind, that wailed throughout the night,
Drops with a sigh of pain.
A vague alarm is creeping
Over the fields and lawn;
Time pauses—night is over,
And yet it is not dawn.
Away down in the pastures
The cattle turn and moan;
All living things are troubled
With a sense of the unknown:

For they with eyes may see now,
And they who question know.
Make the most of the magic hour:
The east begins to glow!

The east is all in tumult,
The charmed hour is past;
For, breaking up the quiet skies,
The day appears at last.

OLIVE MOLESWORTH.